CAN A MAN LOSE HIS SOUL?

—BY—

EDWIN J. BLOOD.

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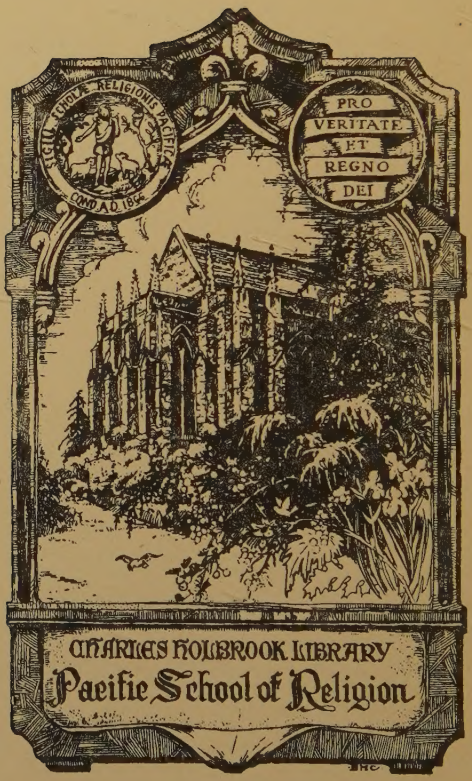
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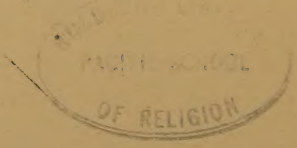

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Can a Man Lose His Soul?

In that man who loves and practices the virtues, having a strong desire to adhere to the path of truth, what elements, belonging to him, preserve an eternal individuality? Is the loss of any man possible, and if so, in what does such loss consist?

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."
GENESIS--2nd Chap. 7th V.

The elements that constitute and belong to man, namely, the body, the divine breath or spirit and the soul are each, at times, referred to separately, as representing or expressing an idea of man.

When we hear the expression, "Man is dust, and unto dust he must return," we believe it refers only to that element of his nature that is earthy, or of gross material.

When we hear the expression, "Man is spirit, and spirit shall return to the God who gave it," we believe it refers to the divine spark, the higher self, which is unchangeable and eternal in its essence.

When we hear the expression, "Man became a living soul," we believe it refers to that portion of his being which is (according to "The Perfect Way" and "Esoteric Christianity,") his individuality and mental constitution, having an intelligent, positive force, and a receptive nature.

These different qualities body, soul and spirit, when referred to separately as indicating an expression of man complete, of course fall short of conveying the true idea.

But when these different elements are viewed collectively, in a light that reveals the relation they hold to each other, one realizes the truth of the saying, "Man is fearfully and wonderfully made."

As before quoted, the soul is the individuality, and mental constitution, possessing a dual nature, an active, intelligent force and a receptive nature; and it partakes of the nature and is built up by the qualities it receives, by virtue of its receptivity, retaining that which it desires; hence it is responsible for the nature of its character.

The affirmation, "The spirit shall return to the God who gave it," might imply that the higher divine spark was an impromptu gift to man. But that portion or element called soul, man produces or becomes. It is a thing of growth. The building of soul is the building of character.

The soul that desires to act in harmony with law and is obedient to its highest impressions of justice, purity and truth and exercises charity will, under the vivifying influence of the higher self acquire a spotless character with that degree of refinement and elevation necessary to admit of its assimilation with the higher self and not until such assimilation takes place, is the soul free from

the possibility of contamination or is the higher self compensated for its efforts in vivifying and inspiring the soul with hope and courage in following the path of truth.

Persistent cultivation by the soul of all it deems good and elevating, leads it to a wealth of virtue that insures its evolution into spirit, and the divine spark, when summoned, can thereby return to the God who sent it with an increase, accrueing from its absorption of the soul.

Nature is a process of evolution by which substance becomes more refined and elevated in its character. The soul is a link in the chain of substance, and when it ceases to rebel and desires to act in harmony with law, it will evolve higher. Evolution is the law of love. But harmony is essential to the operation of the law of love. Hence rebellion destroys the souls harmony with nature and prevents the attainment of conditions necessary for it to approach the divine. Persistent rebellion of the soul means its permanent separation from the higher self, and results in its disintegration. Hence Jesus said, "If a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and men cast them into the fire and they are burned." The Perfect Way," says, Page 66:

"The soul, once begotten and made an individual, is immortal until its own perverse will extinguishes it. The fire of the soul must be kept alive by the divine breath if it endure forever. It must con-

verge, not diverge. If it diverge it will dissipate. The end of progress is unity. The end of degradation is division. Separation of the soul from the higher divine spark of being always means disintegration of soul. Union of soul with the divine spark, always means the crystalization of the soul into spirit eternal. These different conditions simply show the demonstration of the laws of cause and effect and the sooner they are recognized as being immutable, the sooner will man act in harmony with them."

Is it wise for man to indulge in the idea that he is perfectly safe from danger, because one portion or element of his nature is of a higher divine and unchangeable essence? Is it not man's highest duty to be alert and see to it that other elements of his nature become of the same unchangeable essence also? Man should realize that there is no safety until then. Hence it cannot be too indelibly impressed upon the mind, that the power of goodness and nature places upon man the responsibility of building a soul of a quality eternal in its essence.

And the Master gives a distinct warning in the question, "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

It is man's imperative duty to guard against the encroachments of any habit of thought or generation of motives, which, when incorp oratedinto his mental constitution, tend to repel the higher self.

Only that which is endorsed by the higher conscience is of a quality eternal in its nature and

can assimilate with the higher self, hence it is written, "The pure in heart shall see God."

The loss of soul consists in the building of a soul of such a nature and quality, that the higher divine spark of being is compelled to repudiate it. In which case the soul disintegrates and the higher divine spark returns to its source without that increase that might accrue to it by its absorbtion of the soul, and the condition of the higher self is analogous to the servant mentioned in the parable, Luke, chap. 19, 20th verse) who returned the pound to his Lord in a napkin without increase.

Concerning the body, it is to man, in the present generation, a temporary organism, through which the quality of his desires are reflected. But when the last enemy, called death, is overcome, the body is thereby then included in the eternal individuality, and it can also escape disintegration, even as did the body of Elijah, (2nd B Kings, 2nd chap, 11th verse) and as also did the body of Enoch, (Genesis, 5th chap. 24th verse) and the Master's body, even after his crucifiction escaped disintegration. The fact that this achievement is possible, magnifies the importance of the body, and is convincing proof that we are at present incapable of estimating its importance, although now it may only serve as a temporary garment. But we are brought to see that persistent following in the path of truth, brings man to a perfect freedom with material, instead of freedom from it, by virtue of the perfect subjugation of the body to the higher self.

The record shows that a degree of perfection has been attained which includes the preservation of the body, and thus the fact is revealed, that in the very highest state of perfection known to be attainable, the body is one of the elements, and the fact of its presence in that high degree of refinement, wisdom and power, indicates that it is necessary to that exalted condition.

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